Daddy Takes Us HUNTING FLOWERS

Howard R. Garis

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DADDY TAKES US HUNTING FLOWERS

BY

HOWARD R. GARIS

Author of "Daddy Takes us Camping," "Daddy Takes us Coasting," "The Bedtime Stories Series," "The Uncle Wiggily Series," "Those Smith Boys," "The Island Boys," Etc.

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DADDY TAKES US HUNTING FLOWERS

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Off to the Woods	9
II.	Butter and Eggs	17
III.	The Pitcher Plant	27
IV.	The Yarrow Flower	37
V.	The Milkweed Nest	45
VI.	The Funny Cat	53
VII.	The Dutchman's Breeches	62
VIII.	The Dandelion	72
IX.	The Golden Rod	80
X.	Roly-Poly in Trouble	91
XI.	A Pretty Boquet	99
XII.	The Lost Necklace	107

Daddy Takes us Hunting Flowers

CHAPTER I.

OFF TO THE WOODS

"MAB! HAL! Where are you?"

Daddy Blake hung his hat on the front hall rack, and went into the dining room.

"Hal! Mab!" he called again.

"What is it?" asked Aunt Lolly, awakening from a little sleep in her easy chair. "Oh, has anything happened?"

Roly-Poly, the little fat poodle dog, seemed to think there had, for he jumped up and began chasing his tail, going around almost as fast as a pin-wheel on the Fourth of July.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Aunt Lolly. "I do hope nothing has happened."

"No, nothing at all," answered Daddy Blake, cheerfully. "I just want to take the children for a walk in the woods. I think we can find some new, Spring flowers."

"Oh, is that all?" asked Aunt Lolly with a laugh. "Roly-Poly, please be quiet!" she begged. "I can't hear Daddy speak!"

But the little dog laughed—I mean his bark sounded just as if he were laughing, and he raced after his tail, faster than before.

"Hal and Mab are out in the yard, Daddy," said Aunt Lolly, and then she caught the little poodle dog up in her arms, as that seemed the only way to quiet him.

Mr. Blake went out in the yard. There he saw his two children, Harry and Mabel, looking at some white rabbits.

"Do you youngsters want to come with me?" asked their father.

"Oh, Daddy! Where are you going to take us now?" cried Hal, jumping up,

after he had given his rabbit a tender lettuce leaf to nibble.

"Please take us for a walk, Daddy!" begged Mab.

"That is just what I am going to do," went on Mr. Blake. "It is such a nice day that I came home early from the office. Get your hats, and we will go off to the wood. We will see how many kinds of wild flowers we can find."

"Oh, goodie!" cried Mab, whose real name was Mabel, but who was seldom called that; any more than Hal was called Harry. The children liked their short names best.

"We'll have lots of fun," Hal cried, with shining eyes. "We always do when Daddy takes us anywhere."

Soon the Blake children, with their father, were on their way to the green wood, where the trees had just begun to put on their new suits of leaves, making themselves look quite brave and handsome.

"Bow-wow-wow! Bur-r-r-r-r! Wuff!

Bow-wow-wow!" sounded from around the corner by the rain-water barrel.

"Oh, here comes Roly-Poly!" cried Mab, looking back.

"Let him come!" begged Hal.

"Yes, let him come," agreed Mr. Blake.

Roly-Poly came rushing along the gravel walk, wagging his tail so hard that it is a wonder he did not wag it off. He ran here and there, barking as loudly as he could, and sometimes he almost turned a somersault, so quickly did he bound up in the air.

"Where are you children going?" a voice called after Hal and Mab. "Wait a minute and—"

"That's Uncle Pennywait," said Hal, with a laugh.

"We can't wait now, Uncle," spoke Mab, politely. "We are going flower-hunting with Daddy."

"All right. I'll give you each a penny when you come back," said an elderly gentleman, with long, white whiskers, as

he waved his hand to the children. Hal and Mab called him "Uncle Penny-wait," because he so often said: "Wait a minute, and I'll give you a penny." And the children's aunt used to tell them to buy lollypops with the pennies. Not too often, you know, but once in a while. So Hal and Mab called her "Aunt Lolly-pop," or, more often, just "Aunt Lolly."

Soon the children, with their Daddy, were in the woods.

"Now," said Mr. Blake, "we will see who can find the first wild flower. Look carefully, Hal and Mab."

The children searched on both sides of the path. They saw green moss and green ferns, but they did not call them flowers.

"Oh, I've found one! I've found one!" suddenly exclaimed Mab, stooping over something, striped green and brown, that was growing close to the earth.

"That isn't a flower—it's a weed!" said Hal.

"Isn't it a flower, Daddy?" asked Mab.

"Yes, that is called a Jack-in-the-pulpit," Mr. Blake said. "It is a very queer sort of flower."

"Does Mr. Jack preach from his pulpit?" asked Mab, for really the flower was like the pulpits in some churches. The plant had a curved top, or cover to it, and in the middle stood a little green stem. That was "Jack."

"May I pick it, Daddy?" asked Hal.

"Yes, but don't chew any of the root," cautioned Mr. Blake, smiling at his two children.

"Why not?" Mab wanted to know.

"Because the root of that plant, or flower, will burn your tongue as badly as mustard, or horse-radish would," Daddy Blake explained. "The Jack-in-the-pulpit has another name—Indian Turnip—and it is said the Indians used to eat the root, or bulb. But perhaps they didn't mind how hot it was. Jack grows in shady places in the wood, and in the Fall

he and his pulpit become decorated with a bunch of beautiful, scarlet berries."

"Who decorates him?" asked Mab, looking around for a Jack-in-the-pulpit to pick for herself.

"Mother Nature gives him the red berries," answered Mr. Blake, with a smile. "Now I will dig up some of Jack's root, to show you what it is like, but remember not to eat any of it. And if you handle it wash your fingers afterwards, for unless you do you may rub your eyes, and get some of the smart into them."

Daddy Blake turned aside the earth with a sharp stick, until he found some little bulbs, like small potatoes.

"These roots of Jack-in-the-pulpit are said to be good for asthma, whooping-cough and rheumatism," the children's father explained. "But we will not try any of that medicine now. We will walk on and see what other kinds of woodland flowers we may find. We are flower-hunting to-day."

Daddy Blake and the children had not

gone very far when Mab suddenly put her hands to her throat and cried:

"Oh, my locket! My lovely locket with the little diamond in it is gone! I've lost it!"

Surely enough, the golden chain and the locket were not around Mab's throat.

CHAPTER II

BUTTER AND EGGS

WHEN Mab called out that her locket was gone, Daddy Blake, who had walked on ahead of her and Hal, turned quickly and asked:

"What is it, Mab? What is the matter? Have you found some new kind of woodland flower?"

"No, Daddy! I have lost something instead of finding anything," the little girl answered. "My—my lovely locket is gone!" And Mab's eyes glistened with tears, as dew drops shine in the heart of a flower early in the morning.

"Maybe Roly-Poly has your chain and locket," suggested Hal. "He is playing with something over there," and he pointed to the little poodle dog, rolling about on the mossy ground amid the ferns,

worring something that might have been a bone, and having a great deal of fun with it.

"Oh, Hal! Please see if it is my locket!" begged Mab.

"I will," promised the little boy. "Here, Roly, what have you there?" he asked, and, turning to Mab, Hal remarked: "It's like the time mamma lost her diamond ring; isn't it?"

"Oh, but mamma found her diamond ring," spoke Mab. "I remember that. It was the time Daddy took us fishing. Oh, dear! I'm sure we'll never find my little locket again—never!" and Mab was almost sobbing as she looked about on the ground under the woodland trees.

Hal ran over to where Roly-Poly was rolling amid a clump of ferns.

"Come here, sir!" Hal called, to the little poodle dog. "Have you Mab's locket?"

Roly-Poly turned a somersault, sat up and sneezed, and wagged his tail. I guess some dust must have gotten up his nose.

"Is it there? Has Roly-Poly the locket?" asked Mr. Blake.

"No, it was only a stick he was playing with," Hal replied.

"Oh dear!" cried Mab, sadly.

"Never mind. We'll both help you look for your locket," said Daddy Blake. "I'm sure we can find it, Mab, for you must have lost it right around here. If we can't find it, though, I'll get you another."

"But I loved that one best," the little girl said.

"When did you last see it?" asked Hal, tossing aside some last year's dried leaves with his foot.

"Just after we picked the Jacks-in-the-pulpits," Mab said.

"Then we'll look near the place where Jack lives," suggested Mr. Blake.

He and the two children searched among the moss and ferns, that formed a green velvet carpet in the woods. With sticks they poked here and there, turning over stones, but no diamond locket could they find.

"Oh dear! I guess it is gone for ever," sighed Mab. But she tried to be brave, and not cry any more tears than she could help.

"Never mind," spoke Hal, trying to comfort his sister. "I'll let you fly my new kite when we get home. I'm going to make a great big one, and I'll let you hold the string."

"Thank you—Hal," said Mab, and she turned her face away, because, just then, she felt more tears coming into her eyes.

Mr. Blake did not say very much, but he put his arms around his little girl in a loving way she understood very well. They did not like to give up the search for the golden chain and locket, and looked again and again, but it was of no use.

Even Roly-Poly seemed to feel the sadness, and he was not nearly as jolly going home from the woods as he had been in racing toward the forest; tumbling over and over in somersaults, and chasing his tail.

But when Mab reached the house, carrying some ferns and Jack-in-the-pulpit flowers she and Hal had gathered, Aunt Lolly was making ice cream, and the children were so much interested in this, and in helping to turn the freezer, that Mab almost forgot, at least for the time, that she had lost her locket.

"I'll get her another," said Daddy Blake to Mamma Blake, as he told what had happened.

"Yes, but it will not be the same," spoke Mab's mother. "That locket was a present. Did you look all over the woods?"

"Well, not exactly *all* over," answered Mr. Blake, "as the forest is a long and wide one. But we looked around in the place where Mab thought she dropped the chain, which must have come loose at the clasp. But we could not find it. However we'll make another search the next time I take the children flower-hunting." flowers?"

"Are you going to look for more

"Yes; I want Hal and Mab to know the different kinds when they see them in the woods and fields. We shall go flower-hunting again in a few days."

Daddy Blake often took Hal and Mab on little trips. I have told you of some of them in the other books of this series.

First the children and their father went camping, and had a wonderful time in the woods. Then they went fishing, and the two children were nearly carried out to sea in a boat.

When Daddy Blake took Hal and Mab to the circus they had another wonderful time. They went to sleep in one of the big, circus wagons, and—but there! I know you would rather read the circus book for yourselves, and find out what happened, than have me tell you.

Going skating with Daddy was another good time Hal and Mab enjoyed, and Roly-Poly broke through the ice, too. And later on, when the children went to visit their Grandfather in the country, and Daddy Blake took them coasting—well,

you can just imagine what jolly fun they had then!

One day, about a week after Mab had lost her locket, Daddy Blake once more came home early from the office.

"How would you children like to go and hunt for some new wild flowers?" he asked them.

"That would be fine!" Hal cried.

"I'd just love it!" Mab said.

So Daddy Blake led them toward the woods again, with Roly-Poly racing on ahead, barking and tumbling over and over, almost like a circus dog.

"Careful, Mab! Look out!" suddenly called her father, as the little girl walked near a tangle of vines. "Don't touch those leaves! That is poison ivy, and if it rubs against your bare skin it will make very painful sores."

"Poison ivy!" exclaimed Hal. "Why, it looks just like the vine that climbs over our porch, and that isn't poison, for I often pull off long pieces of it as whips for my rocking horse."

"Ah, but this vine is different," explained Daddy Blake. "You see these leaves have only three points to them, while the leaves of our vine at home have five points, like the fingers of your hand. And that is a good way to remember the difference between poison ivy, and the other, sometimes called American ivy, or Virginia creeper."

"How can you remember which is poison?" asked Mab, as she stood well away from the dangerous vine, with its glossy, shiny leaves.

"Just remember this," said Daddy Blake. "The three-leafed ivy is a bad poison. The word 'bad' has only three letters in it, just as the poison ivy leaf has only three points. And the vine that is not poisonous has five leaves, or parts, just like the five fingers of our hands, and so you may handle the five-leafed vine without harm."

"But we have only *four* fingers," spoke Hal with a laugh at his father. "The other is a *thumb!*"

"Well, we may call our thumb a finger when we are trying to remember the difference betwen poison and good ivy," said Daddy Blake. "So remember, children, to keep away from the three-leafed vine, for it spells the word 'B-A-D'!"

Mr. Blake and the children walked on farther, until they came to a meadow, through which ran a little brook. Near the edge of the brook were some tall, green stems growing, and on top of each stem was a sort of plume of light yellow and white flowers.

"There are some butter and eggs," said Daddy.

"Where?" asked Hal, turning around to look. "Did some one leave their grocery basket here?"

"No, I mean those flowers are called butter and eggs," said Mr. Blake with a smile. "Sometimes the yellow blossoms are called bride-weed; also toad-flax, flax-weed or bacon and eggs. They have different names in different parts of this

country. Now let us gather some of those flowers, and see how they are made.

"Why, their mouths open when you squeeze them!" cried Mab in surprise, as she picked some of the pale yellow blossoms.

"Do they bite?" asked Hal, watching his sister carefully.

"No, butter and eggs don't bite," Mr. Blake said. "But I would not be surprised if, near here, we found a flower that catches flies."

"Oh, tell us about that, and show it to us!" eagerly begged Mab.

CHAPTER III

THE PITCHER PLANT

HAL and Mab did not know whether to be interested most in the butter and eggs blossom, that, as the little girl said, "opened its mouth," or to look for the other flower, which, Daddy Blake told them, caught flies.

"Where is it?" asked Hal. "Where is that fly-trap?"

"What is the name of it?" Mab wanted to know.

"One thing at a time, my dears," said Mr. Blake. "First let me tell you a little about this new flower—the butter and eggs—we have found, and then we'll search for the pitcher plant."

"Is that what the fly-catching flower is named?" asked Hal.

"Yes, that is one its names. But

now look at this yellow flower for a moment. These butter and eggs grow in many countries. In Germany the blossoms are used to color cloth, and, I suppose, the little German children may use them with which to color their Easter eggs. Some persons use the boiled juice of the flowers for medicine, while others bruise the blossoms and leaves and make a poultice for boils."

"Why, flowers are useful, as well as being pretty; aren't they, Daddy?" exclaimed Mab, with eager, shinng eyes.

"Oh, yes indeed," her father answered. "And, before we have finished our flower-hunting this summer, we will find many other useful and beautiful plants."

"Show me how this one opens its mouth," begged Hal of his sister. "Maybe it will bite you a little, Mab. Show me how it opens its mouth."

Mab did so. She picked off one of the yellow blossoms, and pressed it gently between her chubby finger and thumb. The yellow sides opened, like the mouth of

some tiny bird or animal getting ready to eat. Hal put his little finger tip down into the throat of the blossom, and, when Mab let go, the flower clung to Hal's hand.

"Oh, look!" he cried with a jolly laugh. "It's eating my finger, but it doesn't hurt a bit!"

"There are many flowers like these of the butter and eggs plant," said Mr. Blake, "that have deep throats, or mouths. Some of them are made that way to hold water, others keep their honey deep down inside, so that only a humming bird, or a bee with a very long tongue, can get it. The pitcher plant is very deep, and some of them hold much water. But it is the leaf, and not the blossom, that catches the flies."

"I wish we could find a pitcher plant," spoke Mab, looking around hoping she might discover one. But how would she know it, when she had never seen it?

"I think there will be some growing around here," said Mr. Blake. "We will walk on and keep our eyes wide open."

"I don't feel a bit like going to sleep," laughed Hal. "But why do they call this butter and eggs, Daddy?" and he shook from his finger the blossom that still clung to it.

"Because, I suppose," his father answerd, "the pale yellow and white blossoms look like a pan of newly-laid eggs—scrambled, fried or made into an omelet—with chunks of melting butter on. But there is another flower I want you to notice before we search for the pitcher plant."

As he spoke Mr. Blake pointed to a cluster of orange-colored blossoms, growing on a tall, green stem, that was square, and not round, as are the stems, or stalks, of most flowers.

"Why, those flowers look just like some ladies' ear rings hanging there," exclaimed Mab, and, as she said that, her hand went up to her throat, for she remembered her little gold chain and locket. But it was not there. They had not found

it since it had been lost in the woods, near the Jack-in-the-pulpit flower.

"Yes, those blossoms do look like ear rings," said Mr. Blake. "They are shaped a little like the old-fashioned ones my mother used to wear, and I suppose that is why they call the flower jewel-weed, for that is one of its names."

Hal and Mab picked a few of the dangling, swaying flowers, and they noticed that some juice ran from the square stem on their fingers.

"Oh, look!" cried Mab. "The flower is leaking."

"It won't hurt you," said Daddy Blake. "Just take a good look at this jewel weed, so you will know it when you see it again. It is almost always found near water. Some day you may want to come out and gather the blossoms and leaves."

"Why?" asked Hal.

"Because the juice of it is very good for easing the pain and smart caused by poison ivy," his father explained. "Take some of the green leaves, or the stalk,

pound them up until the juice oozes out, and spread it over the place where the bad three-leaf ivy poisoned you. The pain will be much better soon, and, in a day or so the poison-itch will be cured."

"That is a good thing to know," Hal said, as he looked carefully at the flowers of the jewel weed. He and Mab thought the orange-colored blossoms, which were speckled with reddish, brown dots, were very beautiful.

"This plant is also called 'Touch-me-not,'" went on Daddy Blake, as Mab gathered more of the jewel weed to carry home with her, for she liked to make bouquets of wild flowers.

"Touch-me-not!" exclaimed Hal. "What a funny name! Doesn't it want anyone to touch it? You'd better look out, Mab!"

"Oh, I guess it didn't mind that," Mr. Blake said. "But you will find that this flower wilts very quickly after being picked. It is called 'Touch-me-not,' because, in the Fall, when the seeds appear,

they grow in little dried bud-cases, which, as soon as they are touched, pop open, scattering the seeds all over, as though they had been shot from a pop-gun."

"Why is that?" asked Hal, who was watching Roly-Poly. The little dog was looking at a big, green bull-frog, that was about to jump into the meadow-brook. "Why do the pods pop open that way and scatter the seeds, Daddy?"

"To make more jewel weed plants grow in new places next year," answered Mr. Blake. "That is one of the ways Mother Nature has for making new flowers and weeds each year. The seeds of some flower, like the dandelion, or milkweed, each have a little feathery sail, parachute or umbrella attached to them, so the wind can blow them to new places where they may fall, and grow by taking root.

"Other seeds have little hooks on them, to catch in our clothing, or in the hair or wool of animals, and those seeds are thus carried to new fields. But the jewel

flower, and some plants like it, pop out and scatter their seeds like a Fourth-of-July fire-cracker, and so distribute them."

"Plants are certainly queer, as well as being useful and beautiful," said Mab, thoughtfully. "But I want to see that one you said catches flies, Daddy."

"So do I!" chimed in Hal.

"I'll see if I can find you one," Daddy Blake said, and, after a little searching he did. It was down in a wet and swampy place.

"Here is a pitcher plant!" called the children's father.

"Oh, how pretty!" cried Mab.

"How wonderful," said Hal, in a low voice.

They were looking at a large, single flower, growing on a green stem, about two feet high. The flower had five purple-red petals, narrowed in the center like a violin, and their rounded ends were folded over, very much like an umbrella.

But the leaves, rather than the flower, were the strangest part of this plant, and in

those leaves the children were much interested.

Daddy Blake picked one leaf, of the many that grew low down, near the ground. Raising the top, which was curled over, something like the cover of a Jack-in-the-pulpit, he showed Hal and Mab that the little leaf-pitcher was filled with water. And on top of this water, which was held in the leaf, much as it might have been held in a cornucopia, were floating a number of dead flies, and some other insects—gnats and mosquitoes.

"Oh, look!" cried Mab. "The flower has really caught some flies to eat!"

"It went—fishing after them," Hal said, as he looked at the water.

"Yes," Daddy Blake agreed, "the flower, or, rather, the pitcher part of the leaf, did the fly-catching. Notice the leaf. See how it is narrow at the bottom, near where it is joined to the root in the ground. Then the leaf broadens out to form the pitcher. Afterward the leaf narrows, and the end is small so it can curl over, and

make a covering for the pitcher, or leaf-cup."

"Our molasses pitcher has a cover like that," Mab said.

"So it has," agreed Daddy Blake. "You will find that this pitcher plant is quite wonderful, and different from any flower we have yet found. Here, Roly-Poly!" he called to the little poodle-dog. "Please go off and roll somewhere else on your back. I don't want you to break these leaves and blossoms until I show Hal and Mab more about them."

CHAPTER IV

THE YARROW FLOWER

WHEN Roly-Poly, the little, fat poodle-dog, who had come flower-hunting with Daddy Blake, Hal and Mab, had found some other place to play than near the pitcher plant, the children's father picked one of the queer leaves, and showed the little boy and girl " how it worked."

The pitcher plant, or Huntsman's Cup, as it is sometimes called, has leaves very much like the Jack-in-the-pulpit, but it has a prettier flower than Jack shows, though indeed Jack himself is pretty enough, and odd enough, for anyone, I think.

" But it is the leaf that does the fly-catching," as Daddy Blake explained. He showed Hal and Mab how the leaves, which were yellowish-green in color,

streaked with dark purple, grew up from the root, close to the ground.

Daddy Blake lifted up the curved top of the leaf, that drooped over the cornucopia part, and showed the children where the water was contained.

"Do flies come to the plant to get a drink, and do they fall in and drown?" asked Hal. "Then does the plant eat them?"

"Something like that; yes," answered Mr. Blake. "Down in the pitcher part of the leaf is some sweet, sticky juice. The flies and insects smell this, and come to eat it, just as bees buzz around other flowers to gather honey.

"And when the fly, or little bug, crawls down inside this cup, or pitcher, to get a drink of sweet juice, he finds it very easy to get in, but very hard to get out."

"Why is that?" asked Mab.

"Because the fly's feet are caught in the sticky juice, and also because of these hairs, or spines," and Mr. Blake pointed out a number on the inside of the cup.

"You notice the stiff hairs all point downward, toward the inside of the leaf," he went on. "They are like the wires of some mouse traps. It is easy enough for the fly to crawl past the hairs, as they point downward, just the way he is going, but when he tries to crawl back he can not do it. The stiff hairs catch under his wings, or around his legs, and he cannot get out."

"Then what happens?" asked Hal.

"Then the fly, or bug, falls into the water in the lower part of this pitcher plant, and is drowned. Gradually the plant eats him, or absorbs him. You might even say it digests the fly, for the plant has no teeth with which to chew. But still it manages to eat, and the flies and insects, though they die, help to make the pitcher plant grow larger and more beautiful."

"Why, there is a lot of water in the pitcher!" Mab exclaimed, as her father tipped it up and spilled out the liquid.

"Yes," said Mr. Blake. "Proabably most of the water rained in, but some of it

is the juice of the plant. Some, perhaps, was the morning dew. I have read stories of thirsty hunters and travelers, in countries where pitcher plants grow very large, drinking the water from these queer cup-like leaves."

"Do they, really?" Hal asked.

"Well, I don't know for sure, of course," his father said. "At any rate there is often considerable water in the various leaves of the pitcher plants. If you sat down in a woodland bed of them, as Thoreau, the nature-lover, once did, you might become quite wet, which would be a surprise to you.

"The pitcher plant," Mr. Blake went on, "grows best in swamps, though it is often found in damp places along the railroad tracks in Summer. When cold weather comes the water in the little leaf-pitchers freezes into a solid lump of ice."

"Then it can't catch any flies," said Mab.

"No, not then," agreed Daddy Blake. "Now I think we'll go and—Look out,

Hal!" he suddenly cried. "You're going to fall in the brook!"

There was a splash, and Hal, who had unexpectedly slid down a little bank, found himself standing in a puddle of water that came over his shoe tops.

"I'm not *going* to fall in, Daddy!" exclaimed Hal with a twinkle in his eyes. "I *did* fall!"

"So I see," said Mr. Blake.

"Oh, he'll be drowned!" gasped Mab.

"Pooh!" answered Hal, just like a boy. "I can't drown! I'm standing on bottom now. That's all the deeper it is—not up to my knees!" and he lifted up one dripping foot to show his sister.

"But your feet are wet," said Daddy Blake. "How did it happen?"

"I—I guess I just slipped," Hal said, while Roly-Poly came rushing up, barking, to see what all the trouble was about. Mr. Blake reached down his hand, and soon pulled Hal back again to the bank of the little brook where they had been standing to look at the pitcher plant.

"I've got as much water in my shoes as one of those funny leaves has," said Hal with a laugh.

"Yes, and I think this will end our flower-hunting for to-day," Mr. Blake said. "We must get home and have you put on dry stockings and shoes, Hal. Come along, Mab!"

It was a warm day, so Hal did not much mind getting his feet wet. Soon the children and their father were at the Blake home, and while Hal's mother found him a dry pair of stockings and slippers, Aunt Lolly put Mab's bouquet of wild flowers in a vase of water.

Hal caught a little cold, from having gotten his feet wet, and could not go out next day. And, what was worse than the cold, one of his teeth began to ache. It ached in the night and Hal awakened all the others in the house with his crying.

"Oh, but it hurts!" Hal sobbed when his mother came into his room, and told him to try to go to sleep and forget the pain.

"I—I can't forget it," Hal said. "The pain won't let me. It keeps knocking on my tooth all the while!"

"I wonder what I could put on to stop the pain," said Mamma Blake, thoughtfully. She felt very sorry for her little boy.

"We used to use yarrow root for toothache when I was a girl," said Aunt Lolly.

"What is yarrow?" Hal wanted to know. He was wide awake now, and all the folks were up. The lights were glowing in several rooms, though it was past midnight.

"Yarrow is one of the wild flowers," Aunt Lolly said. "I think some grows in our back yard. Did Daddy ever show you any yarrow when he took you flower-hunting?"

"No, we have not yet discovered any yarrow," said Mr. Blake. "But we'll go out in the yard now, Aunt Lolly, and see if we can not find some."

Daddy Blake lighted a lantern, and soon Hal saw it bobbing about in the darkness of the back yard, as his father and Aunt

Lolly searched along the path for the yarrow. Hal cried softly, for his tooth seemed to ache more than ever now.

Pretty soon Daddy Blake and Aunt Lolly came in. Aunt Lolly carried a green stalk, the leaves of which were like fine fringe. There was a clump of tiny, yellowish-brown flowers on top of the stalk, and from the earth-end dangled fine thread-like roots.

"This is yarrow, and it will stop the pain of your tooth," said Aunt Lolly. "To-morrow you can go to the dentist's. Don't cry any more, Hal."

The little boy wondered what Aunt Lolly was going to do.

CHAPTER V

THE MILKWEED NEST

LITTLE HAL BLAKE held his chubby hand to his aching face. How he wished he had not fallen in the water the day before, when hunting flowers with Daddy. Getting his feet wet gave Hal a cold in the tooth, which pained him very much.

Still he was interested, just now, in the yarrow plant which his father and Aunt Lolly had brought in from the yard, having found it by the light of the lantern. Hal wondered how in the world that plant would cure his toothache.

"Ah, yes, I remember the yarrow plant now," said Daddy Blake, looking at the green stalk by the bright light in Hal's bedroom. "It is a very old and historic plant.

"Some persons call the yarrow

'Soldiers' Woundwort,' and Achilles, that great fighter, is said to have used it to heal the wounds of his soldiers who fought at the battles and siege of Troy," went on Daddy Blake.

Hal was more interested than ever, now. He had seen a picture of Achilles in the class-room of some of the High School pupils. And to think that he was going to have put on his aching tooth some of the same sort of plant that Achilles may have used! Wasn't it wonderful!

"Yarrow is good for many uses," said Aunt Lolly, who was busy washing the dirt off some of the fine, white hair-like roots. "When I was a little girl the old folks used to make yarrow tea and drink it. They thought it cured many kinds of illness, and perhaps it did help. We used to steep the leaves in hot water, and put the lotion on our bumps and bruises. It is good for nose-bleed, too. Some folks chew the green leaves of the yarrow for toothache, but I think the root is better. Now we'll try some of it on you, Hal."

The yarrow plant had a pleasant smell, something like spices, when the turkey is roasting for Thanksgiving. Aunt Lolly pulled off some of the now cleaned roots, scraped away the outer covering, which was like a fine bark, and rolled the scrapings into a little ball, or pill.

"Do I have to—swallow that?" asked Hal. He never did like pills.

"No, don't swallow it. Just put these root-scrapings on the gum, near your aching tooth," Aunt Lolly said. "Then, in a minute or so, tell me how it feels."

Carefully Hal put the little pellet of root-scrapings near his aching tooth. Mab, his mother, his father and Aunt Lolly watched him. Uncle Pennywait, seeing he could be of no use, in handing out pennies, since neither Hal nor Mab could go to the candy store at that hour of night, had gone back to bed. Daddy Blake was smelling some of the yarrow leaves, which he crushed in his hand.

Soon they all saw a smile come on Hal's sad face.

" How does it feel? " asked Aunt Lolly.

" Why—why! " Hal exclaimed in delight. " My mouth feels—just as if my foot was asleep! "

" What a funny feeling! " laughed his mother.

" I mean my gum feels all numb and prickly," Hal went on. " It prickles just like when your hand wakes up, after you've had it under your head, and have slept on it a long time. And my tongue feels the same way."

" I thought it would," said Aunt Lolly. " That's what yarrow does to the toothache. It doesn't cure it, but it makes the pain numb, or sleepy, so you don't feel it so much. Now I think you, yourself, can go to sleep, Hal. I'll make another little root-pill for you, so if you awaken from the pain again you need not get out of bed to put the yarrow on your tooth."

Soon Hal was sound asleep once more, his pain all gone. But in a chair near him was the yarrow root, ready to use if he needed it. However he did not, and the

next day he went to the dentist's, even though the tooth did not ache.

" For we had better either have the dentist take the tooth out, or fill it," said Daddy Blake. " Then, when we go flower-hunting again, it will not so much matter if you do get your feet wet."

Hal was not very fond of going to the dentist's, but he walked bravely to the office, and climbed up in the chair, which had so many shiny handles and wheels. Soon the aching tooth was pulled out. It hurt hardly at all. Perhaps the yarrow root made the gum numb and " prickly " like one's foot when it goes to " sleep," as we call it.

" I guess I'll have to keep some of that yarrow root in my office," the dentist said with a laugh to Hal, as the little boy got down from the chair.

" My Daddy, or Aunt Lolly can show you where it grows," Hal remarked. " They know all about wild flowers."

" Oh, no, hardly *all,* Hal," spoke Daddy Blake. " But, now that your tooth won't

ache any more we'll take a walk to-morrow and see if we can discover some new blossoms."

The next day was pleasant and sunny, and Mr. Blake took the children for a stroll toward a green meadow, about a mile from the house. Roly-Poly, of course, went along also.

"Wait a minute!" called Hal's and Mab's uncle after them. "Wait a minute and I'll give you each a penny."

"Yes, let's wait," suggested Hal. "Because my aching tooth is out now, and I can eat a little candy."

So Hal and Mab went back to where Uncle Pennywait sat on the shady porch, and he gave them each five cents. Then the children started off for a walk with Daddy Blake.

"There are the woods where I lost my little diamond locket," Mab said, as they passed the forest on their way to the green meadow. "I wonder if we could find it if we looked now?"

Her eyes shone brightly, as though there

were tears just behind the dark curtains of her lashes. But Mab did not cry.

"I am afraid your locket is gone," her papa said. "But I will get you another on your birthday. Now let us see what new wild flowers we can find."

As they were walking past a big tree, Hal cried out:

"Oh, Daddy! Look! Here's some sort of a nest!" He pointed to a round hole in the trunk of the tree. "It's a nest," the little boy went on, "and it's lined with cotton. I didn't know cotton grew in this meadow." Hal pulled some white fluffy stuff from the edge of the nest-hole.

"That isn't exactly cotton," said Daddy Blake with a smile. "It is something like it, though, but more like silk. And it is from the milkweed plant. See, the nest is lined with the white silk from the milkweed pods. I think this nest must be the home of a bushytailed squirrel."

And, just then, surely enough, a squirrel, with a wide, sweeping tail, almost as large as a play-dusting-brush,

sprang out of the white-lined hole, and scrambled up the rough bark on the trunk of the tree. The squirrel chattered, and then dived down into the nest-hole again.

"Oh, he's gone!" said Mab, in disappointed tones.

But, an instant later the squirrel popped out again, and with him came some of the soft, white, silky lining of the nest. It fell to the ground.

"A milkweed nest," murmured Hal, as the squirrel, still chattering, climbed up to a branch over the children's head. "I wonder if there are any more squirrels in it? I'm going to find out," Hal went on.

Before his father could stop him, Hal had thrust his hand down into the nest.

"Oh, it's nice and soft!" Hal said. "It feels like—"

Hal suddenly stopped. A queer look came over his face, and he cried out:

"Ouch! Oh, dear! I'm bit! Something has bitten me! Something down inside the milkweed nest has hold of my thumb. Oh Daddy!"

CHAPTER VI

THE FUNNY CAT

DADDY BLAKE hurried toward Hal, whose arm was thrust down in the hole in the tree, almost up to the little fellow's shoulder. Hal could not seem to pull his hand loose.

"Something is biting me! Something is biting me!" he cried, and he appeared to be in more pain than the night when he had the toothache, before it was cured with the yarrow root.

"What is the matter? What is it?" asked Mab.

"A snake! There's a snake down in the squirrel's nest, and it has hold of my thumb!" Hal said.

Mr. Blake quickly thrust his own hand and arm down inside the milkweed-lined nest. Then Hal said:

"It's all right now, Daddy. Whatever it was that had hold of me has let go. But something bit me."

Hal pulled out his thumb, but, unlike little Jack Horner, who, with his Christmas pie, sat in a corner, Hal did not pull out a plum. Instead his thumb had some little holes in it, and from them came tiny drops of blood.

"Oh, was it a snake, Daddy?" asked Mab, getting ready to run away.

"No, dear," her father answered. "I think it was—"

But he did not have to say what it was, for, just then, two little baby squirrels put their heads outside of the hole in the tree. The big squirrel, on the branch above, saw them, and with a great chattering and scolding, jumped down.

The big squirrel scrambled into the nest, and then the heads of the little ones disappeared. Probably the papa or mamma squirrel told them they must not look out when folks were around, though of course

neither Hal, Mab nor their father would have harmed the little gray animals.

"Was that what bit me, Daddy?" asked Hal. "One of the baby squirrels?"

"I think so," answered Mr. Blake. "Perhaps they thought your thumb was something good to eat."

Hal laughed at that.

"Does it hurt very much?" asked sister Mab.

"Not very much," Hal said.

"I'll wind my handkerchief around it," Mab said, and she gently did.

"It doesn't hurt hardly at all now," Hal bravely said.

Then the big squirrel put its head out of the nest again, perhaps to see if the queer two-legged man and his children had gone.

Roly-Poly, the little fat poodle dog, stood up on his hind legs, barking hard at the squirrel.

"Oh, you can't get him," said Hal, to the dog, and Roly-Poly could not, for down into his nest again popped the

squirrel, scattering out some more of the fluffy white lining.

"See," spoke Daddy Blake, picking it up, "see how Mother Nature even makes bed-clothing for the animals. What a nice, soft, downy quilt this is for the baby squirrels."

"What plant did you say it came from?" asked Mab.

"The milkweed," went on Daddy Blake. "There are some of the flowers growing over by that large rock," and he pointed across the meadow.

Hal and Mab saw a plant, perhaps three feet high. It had a long, slender green stem, with large, thick, pale-green leaves on it. On top of the plant was a cluster of purple blossoms.

Mab broke off the flower-plume, and then, looking at her hands, she cried out:

"Why, Daddy! The plant is bleeding white blood!"

"That is the juice, or milk," said Mr. Blake, with a laugh, "and that is why the plant is called milkweed."

"Do cows make it?" asked Hal.

"Oh, no," explained his father. "I think it is called milkweed just because the juice of it is white and thick, like milk. All plants, as well as trees, have juice, or sap, in them. That is just the same to them as our blood is to us. Milkweed flowers have a pleasant smell, as I guess you have found out, Mab, and some persons eat the tender, small plants for greens, much as we eat spinach or asparagus."

"Ugh! It's bitter!" exclaimed Mab, who had put to her lips her hand, on which was some of the white juice.

"Yes, it is very bitter," agreed Daddy Blake. "But perhaps the young and tender plants are not. Some persons say the root of the milkweed is good for asthma, which is a disease that prevents you from breathing well. Whether that is so or not I can't say. But there is a part of the plant we are sure is very useful, as you have just seen, in lining the squirrels' nest. Nothing could be better than that."

"But I don't see any of that white, silky

stuff on this plant," spoke Hal, looking at the one from which Mab had taken the purple flowers.

"No, the white silk only comes in the Fall," his father explained. "When the milkweed is ready to 'go to seed,' as we say, that is when it gets ripe, large, green pods appear on the stalk. They are about three inches long, and inside they are filled with brown seeds. Each seed has, fastened to it, many long, silky threads, just as a dandelion seed has a feathery tail. Only the milkweed's seeds have more, and softer, threads, than have the dandelion's. Sometimes the milkweed is called 'silkweed.' When the pods are dry they burst open, and the wind blows the fringed seeds all over, as it blows those of the dandelion, or the little airship seeds of the maple trees. Each milkweed seed becomes something like a little toy balloon, and can travel a far distance through the air. That is one of the ways in which Mother Nature scatters the seeds of her plants, to make new ones grow in new places."

" Isn't it wonderful! " cried Mab, with shining eyes.

" Very wonderful," Hal agreed.

" Is the silk from the milkweed plant good for anything else but to line squirrels' nests? " Mab wanted to know, as Hal took her handkerchief from his thumb. The bleeding had stopped.

" Yes, the fluffy silk is often used to stuff sofa cushions, or pillows," Daddy Blake answered, " and I have even heard of bed mattresses being stuffed with it, though it must take a great many pods to make a bed.

" This squirrel, you see, knew that the silk from the milkweed would make a fine, soft lining for his nest. So, last Fall, when the pods burst, he gathered as much as he wanted, for then there was plenty in this meadow. Birds may also use the silk as a lining for their nests."

" Oh, it must be just lovely for the little birdies to nestle in it," Mab said. " May we come out in the Fall, Daddy, and get some of the silk from the milkweed pods? "

"I think so," her father answered. "Why, are you going to stuff a cushion?"

"Yes, a small one for Roly-Poly to sleep on," Mab said, with a little laugh, that made her nose crinkle up in funny wrinkles.

Daddy Blake and the children walked on. As they looked back they could see the squirrel sitting on a fence near the tree. The squirrel seemed glad that he was to be left alone with his family. Perhaps he did not like the barking of Roly-Poly.

"I wonder if the little squirrels drink the white juice of the milkweed plant?" asked Mab, as she put her nose down in the cluster of purple blossoms.

"Perhaps," said Daddy Blake with a smile, "but I think it is too bitter for them."

Just then Hal, who had run on ahead over the green meadow with Roly-Poly, suddenly cried out:

"Oh, Daddy! Look at that cat!" and he pointed to one that was rolling over

and over on a patch of green grass, near a plant that had little, pale, purple flowers on it. "What's the matter with the cat?" asked Hal. "Doesn't it act funny!"

"Maybe Roly-Poly bit it," said Mab.

"Roly-Poly is too nice to bite cats," Hal exclaimed. "Besides, here is Roly right near me. He didn't bite the cat."

"Well, we'll go over and see what is the matter," said Daddy Blake, as he and the children started toward the pussy. For certainly it was acting very strangely —rolling over and over near the pale green plant.

CHAPTER VII

THE DUTCHMAN'S BREECHES

HAL and Mab Blake, as they walked behind Daddy, toward the queer pussy, were just a little bit frightened.

"For," said Hal to his sister, "maybe that cat has a fit, and will scratch us."

"Or bite us," added Mab.

"I think that pussy has no fit," said Mr. Blake. "It is true kittens, and sometimes cats, do have fits if they eat too much meat, or other things that are not good for them, but they do not act as this pussy is acting. See, it seems to be having a very good time."

And indeed the strange cat did behave that way. First it would lie down and roll over and over in the grass.

Then it would stand up on its hind legs, and paw and claw at the flowers and leaves

of the pale green plant. Sometimes the kitten would actually turn a somersault, as Roly-Poly often did.
he smiled. Next he laughed. The kitten now lay on its side, with its four paws outstretched, the very picture of lazy comfort.

"Catnip!" exclaimed the children's father. "That's what the kitten has been eating—catnip!"

"Is that what makes it act so queer?" asked Hal.

"Yes," replied Daddy Blake. "The kitten loves catnip so much that she will try to get it all over herself, outside on her fur, as well as inside her stomach."

"Is catnip good to eat?" inquired Mab.

"Well, it is good for cats. That is how it got its name, I suppose. But you had some catnip yourself once, Mab."

"I did?" and the little girl opened her eyes wonderingly.

"Yes, Mab, when you were a little baby, Aunt Lolly used to give you catnip

tea for a stomach ache. Perhaps that is why this kittie took some. See, she has quieted down, and now we will go up and look at the plant. The kitten seems to be asleep."

Hal and Mab picked some of the catnip. It had a strong odor, which they rather liked.

The flowers of the catnip plant were not large, and they could not be called beautiful—not pretty enough, Mab thought, to put in a bouquet. But the leaves were of a delicate shade of green, and quite soft and velvety to the touch. The air was filled with the odor of the catnip, for the kitten had crushed and bruised some of the leaves.

"The catnip plant is very useful," Daddy Blake said, as Mab stroked the fur of the kitten which lay on its back with its four legs up in the air, like a table that has been turned upside down. "You can buy the dried catnip leaves in the drug store," went on the children's papa, "and cats will make almost as much fuss over the

drug-store catnip, as they will over that which comes fresh from the field.

"I suppose catnip is a sort of medicine to them. It is also good for babies, as Mab ought to know."

"Oh, Daddy! It's a good while since I was a baby!" Mab said.

"I was only joking," Mr. Blake replied. "The catnip grows in many countries besides our own," he went on. "Some is even found in Asia, which is a long way from here. Now suppose we take home a little of this catnip. Aunt Lolly likes to dry the leaves, and save them to make tea of, when you children become ill. We will also give some of the plant to our cat, for catnip does not grow around our house, and our cat may not have had any in a long time."

The kitten, which had acted so strangely, was now purring and brushing up against Daddy Blake's legs.

"Well, we'll have to leave you now, pussy," he said. "That is unless you want to come hunting wild flowers with us.

But I don't believe you do, for I know of no other kind of plant you would like to eat."

The kitten did not seem to want to go flower-hunting, but, instead, went back to roll in the catnip again. Daddy Blake, with Hal and Mab, walked on across the field, and toward the woods, for the sun was warm and they wanted to rest in the shade.

On the way Daddy Blake pointed out to the children many more wild flowers, some large and some small. There was one plant which grew thickly in the cow-pasture. On top of the stem grew a cluster of fine, white blossoms. The cluster was about as large as the palm of Daddy Blake's hand, but round and flat, and the feathery leaves of the plant spread out on all sides of the tall, green stalk.

"What is that?" asked Mab.

that we eat, and which rabbits like so well.

"When I was a boy," Daddy Blake went on, "I never liked the wild carrot plant, because my kite's tail would get

tangled up in it as I ran across the field. But some persons use the roots of this wild carrot to make a salve for cuts and sores, so perhaps it is more useful than we think."

Daddy Blake pointed out many other plants and flowers to Hal and Mab as they walked in the fields. There were wild purple asters, bouncing Bets, which were pretty pink flowers with a nice smell, chickweed, which birds like to nibble at, big, red clovers, deep down in the grass where the bumble bees could gather honey from them, and many other flowers.

Mr. Blake also showed the children some yellow clover, and the high-growing, or sweet-clover, on which were many small bees—real honey bees, that lived in hives and made the sweet stuff for boys and girls. Dandelions there were also, in the meadow, and thousands of white daisies, as well as yellow buttercups. Mab held one of these flowers under Hal's chin.

"What are you doing that for?" he asked.

"To see how much you like butter," answered the little girl with a jolly laugh.

"How does that tell?" Hal wanted to know.

"Oh, it's just a joke," explained Daddy Blake. "You see the yellow buttercup petals are so shiny that they make a little, reflected yellow spot of light under your chin when some one holds a flower there. The brighter the spot is the more you are supposed to like butter. But of course the brighter the sun shines the more brilliant the spot will be, so that doesn't count."

"Well, I like butter anyhow," Hal said. "I don't need a flower to tell me that."

"Oh, what lots of wild flowers there are!" exclaimed Mab, as she looked across the meadow that was fairly blossoming with them. "I'll never learn all the kinds there are."

"It would take quite a long time to learn all their names," Daddy Blake said, "but we will learn a few kinds at a time. Soon we will be in the woods, where different flowers grow—flowers that must be kept

cool and moist, and in the dark, or they will wither and die."

Hal, Mab and Daddy Blake were walking in the wood a little later. The forest was cool and shady. As they went down in a little dell, through which trickled a brook, singing a song of joy and gladness as it boiled and bubbled over the green, mossy stones, Mab, who was walking on ahead, suddenly stopped, and, reaching for her father's hand, whispered:

"Oh, Daddy! See there! Some little boy-fairies have been here, and they've hung up their tiny trousers to dry on the bushes. See!"

Nodding on a swaying stalk were some small white things, just the least bit pink, and they did look like many pairs of tiny knickerbockers, hung to dry upside down.

"Did fairies leave them there?" asked Mab.

"Fairies!" exclaimed Hal. "Fairies? Pooh!"

"Hush, Hal dear! Not so loud. You

might scare them away! Aren't they fairy trousers, Daddy?"

"Well, some folks might call them that," said Mr. Blake. "They do look as if little elves had been playing in the dirt, and had soiled their 'nickers' so their mothers had to hang them out here to dry after they had been washed. In fact those flowers are called Dutchman's breeches."

"Dutchman's breeches!" cried Hal. "How funny!"

"Yes," said Mr. Blake, "they are rather queer. Come closer and look at them. See how very much they are like the baggy trousers which the Dutch boys and men of Holland wear. The flowers appear to hang upside down, you notice, but, either way you look at them, they seem to be very like a pair of Dutch trousers. Sometimes this flower is called Soldier-cap, and that also is a good name, but Dutchman's breeches is the more common."

"They look a little like a flower mamma has—she calls it bleeding-heart," spoke Mab.

"Yes, both flowers belong to the same family," Daddy Blake explained. "They are cousins, so to speak. But aren't these pretty, children?"

"Oh, just lovely!" Mab exclaimed, and she gathered some of the dangling blossoms, that were hung delicately on the stem of the plant, something like the blossoms of the jewel weed that cures the sting of poison ivy.

"What are those queer flowers over there?" asked Hal, pointing to some that grew in a dark, shadowy place. They were not very tall, but were white and stiff, and not at all like the other green plants, with prettily colored blossoms.

"Aren't they funny," said Mab. "What are they, Daddy?"

"Those are Indian pipes," said Mr. Blake.

"Oh—Indians!" whispered Mab, looking suddenly over her shoulder. "Are—are there—Indians around here?"

Daddy Blake laughed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DANDELION

WHEN his sister Mab asked that question about Indians, after Daddy Blake had said the queer white flowers in the dark wood were Indian pipes, Hal, too, looked over his shoulder. But when he heard his father laugh the little boy smiled.

"There can't be any Indians here; can there, Daddy?" Hal asked.

"No, there are none," Mr. Blake replied. "I suppose there were some in these woods, years ago, but not any more. And I suppose the early settlers named this flower after the Indians because our forefathers first saw the blossoms in the woods where the Redmen roamed. But now let us go over and look at the Indian pipes."

"Don't let Roly-Poly roll in them and

break them before we gather some," spoke Mab.

" The flowers look as though they would easily break," remarked Hal. " Are they really flowers? " he inquired, as he stooped over and picked one from the damp, mossy bed where it grew. Mab did the same thing. Roly-Poly could be heard farther off in the woods, barking at a frog, perhaps.

" Why how cold and damp the blossom feels! " Mab exclaimed. " I—I don't like it! " and she dropped the one she had picked.

" No, it is not as nice and glowing as a dandelion, or a daisy," said Mr. Blake. " Still it is very beautiful. See, it looks as though it were made of wax. All flowers are not alike. Some are more beautiful than others. Mother Nature makes many different kinds."

The Indian pipe, as Hal and Mab noticed, did indeed seem to be made of wax. The stem, or stalk, had no leaves on it, and the flower, which grew on top was

shaped like a shell. The blossom hung down like a bell, and the inside of some of the flowers was tinted a delicate pink, like the inside of a sea shell.

"This is a queer plant," said Daddy Blake. "It does not grow in the earth, all by itself, as other plants grow, but it is what is called a 'parasite.' That is it lives on other plants, getting its nourishment from them, just as there are some persons who will not work, but live by what others do."

"I don't like this plant, either," Hal said, as he dropped the blossoms he had gathered.

"Even the little tiny catnip flowers are better," Mab declared.

Daddy Blake laughed again.

"Well, the catnip is a stronger plant," he said. "It loves the sunshine. The Indian pipe could not live in the sunlight. It must grow in the deep woods, where it is almost dark."

"It can not be very happy," said Mab softly.

"Perhaps not," spoke Daddy Blake. "Yet we can not tell. Mother Nature made different plants for different places. The Indians used to put this plant on their sore eyes, thinking it would cure them. I don't know whether it did or not. They called it the ice plant, because it is so cold, and white. It may have been because it was cool and moist that it made their sore and fevered eyes feel better.

"But Indian pipe is the more common name, and it was called that, I think, because it does look much like something in which tobacco is smoked."

"Yes, it is just like a funny sort of pipe," agreed Hal. "I guess I'll take one home to show Uncle Pennywait."

But Mab would not pick any of the queer, white wax-like blossoms for her bouquet.

"It is just as well not to," her father said, "for the Indian pipes turn black and wither soon after you pluck them. I just wanted you to see one of Mother Nature's plant-children which is not strong enough

to live by itself, but has to depend on other growing things. But now let us go out in the sunshine."

"Oh, what a lot of dandelions!" cried Hal, as he and Mab, with their father, walked out of the wood a little later, and found themselves in a green meadow that was fairly carpeted with the bright yellow blossoms, which looked like the brass buttons on a policeman's coat.

"Dandelions are nice flowers," declared Mab. "They always blossom so early. When I see them in the grass I know it is time for Spring to be here, so I can wheel my doll in her carriage and roll my hoop."

"Yes, and I can roller-skate and play ball," said Hal, with a laugh.

"The dandelion is a very useful plant," said Mr. Blake, "and it grows in many parts of this country."

"Useful!" exclaimed Mab. "Of what use is it, Daddy? The stems are too short to pick the flowers for a bouquet—that is almost always, though sometimes I find

long stems. But then the dandelion is gone, and there is only white fuzz left."

"The white fuzz has seeds on the end of it," her father explained. "Each little brown seed has a small parachute, or umbrella, fastened to it, just as the milkweed seeds have a bit of white, fluffy silk made fast to them. But the dandelion plant, and not the flowers, is the more useful part. Early in the spring you may see the Italian women going about, digging up the dandelion leaves with sharp knives."

"What for?" Hal wanted to know.

"They boil the leaves for greens," said Mr. Blake, "just as mamma boils spinach or beet-tops. Greens are very healthful, and none more so than dandelions. Other persons than the thrifty Italians have found out how good the dandelion greens are, and the other day, in a restaurant, I had some for dinner. Then, too, the root of the dandelion plant is much used for medicine, to make Spring tonics. So you see how useful even a simple little growing plant may be."

"We used to take the long dandelion stems, and drink water through them," Hal said. "The stems are hollow like macaroni sticks, or a putty-blower."

"And the juice in the stems is white, and bitter, like the milkweed," Mab said. "It is very bitter!"

She made a funny little face as she remembered this unpleasant taste.

"Well, bitter medicine is often good for us," Daddy Blake said. "It may make us well when nothing else will."

"You can blow on the long dandelion stems, and make a funny noise," went on Mab. "And we girls used to split them down with our tongues, and make 'curls.' Then, when the dandelion gets old, and has gray hair, we told what time it was by blowing the little feathers off.

"We took three puffs, and however many whiskers there were left, that was the time of day. If there were three fuzzy things, that didn't blow off, it was three o'clock."

"What time was it if they all blew off?"

asked Daddy Blake, with a smile at his little daughter.

"Oh, that didn't count! We took another stem and blew over again," said Mab, laughing.

The children now started for home, Roly-Poly running on ahead, and barking at everything he saw.

"Will you take us flower-hunting again soon, Daddy?" asked Mab.

"Yes," her father answered, "for there are many more kinds to see in the woods and fields."

CHAPTER IX

THE GOLDEN ROD

HAL and Mab Blake ran from the house one pleasant Summer day, laughing and shouting. Roly-Poly, the little, fat poodle dog, ran after them, barking loudly. At last he ran so fast that he fell down, and, before he could stop himself, he had turned a somersault, head over heels.

"Wait! Wait!" begged Mab of her brother, as he rushed out of the gate. "I can't run any more."

"Why not?" Hal asked. "Are you tired? Why, we only just started to run."

"No, I'm not tired," Mab answered, "but I want to laugh at Roly-Poly. He is so funny! And I can't run and laugh at the same time!"

"All right, I'll wait!" Hal said, and he

too, had to laugh with Mab. For Roly-Poly did look so funny, sitting up, after he had turned the somersault. The little poodle dog did not seem to know what had happened. He barked and growled as Hal and Mab laughed, just as though he did not like to be made into a joke.

"Never mind, Roly," said Mab, kindly patting his head. "If we find a bone, when we go flower-hunting to-day, you shall have it."

"Perhaps we may find some kind of a flower, or plant, that Roly would like, just as our kitten liked catnip," Hal said. "But dogs don't eat plants, I guess."

"Yes, they do," Mab said. "I saw Roly-Poly chewing grass one day, and the next day it rained."

"Pooh! It didn't rain because Roly ate grass; did it?" asked Hal.

"I don't know," Mab answered. "But he ate grass, anyhow. Didn't you, Roly?" she asked.

"Bow-wow!" barked the little fat poodle dog, and then he ran on again.

"Where are you going, children?" called their mother after them, as Hal and Mab once more started off. Mrs. Blake was giving the kitten some of the catnip leaves which Daddy had brought home when he had taken his little boy and girl flower-hunting a few days before. "Where are you going?"

"We are just going down in the meadow for a little while, mother," Hal said. "Daddy isn't quite ready to take us walking, and he said we might go after some flowers by ourselves, until he came."

"All right. But don't go too far!" cautioned Mrs. Blake.

"We won't!" promised Hal and Mab.

"Wait a minute, and I'll give you a penny," Uncle Pennywait called after them.

"We'll get it when we come back, thank you, Uncle dear," said Hal, with a laugh. "We aren't going to spend any pennies now."

Off ran the children to the green meadow.

" Look! " cried Mab. " What big dandelions, Hal! " and she pointed to a clump of tall, waving golden-yellow flowers.

" Those aren't dandelions," Hal said.

" What are they, then? "

" I don't know, but they're not dandelions," Hal said. " The stem is different, and so are the leaves. We'll take some home and ask Daddy what they are."

Soon the two children had each gathered a bouquet of the yellow blossoms, which nodded in the wind on their long stems like the gay plumes that circus horses wear on their heads in the parade.

" Let's go back now," suggested Mab, after a bit. " Daddy may be waiting for us."

Their arms filled with the yellow blossoms, the children ran back across the meadow, followed by Roly-Poly, who did not seem to like being left alone. When Uncle Pennywait saw Hal and Mab, coming up the front walk, with their yellow flowers, he cried out:

"Don't bring them in the house, please! Don't bring them near me!"

Uncle Pennywait waved his hands at the children, as if to "shoo" them away, as Mamma Blake "shooed" the chickens.

"Don't come near me with those flowers!" Uncle Pennywait exclaimed. "Please keep away! Don't bring them near me!"

"Why not? Are they poison?" Hal wanted to know.

"Not exactly poison, but they make me—sneeze!" Uncle Pennywait said. "That is the golden rod flower, and it is very pretty, I know. But there is a yellow dust on it—pollen it is called, and from it the bees make wax houses, in which they put their honey.

"But the golden rod dust gets up my nose, and makes me sneeze! It gives me hay fever. Take it away, please do! It makes me—aker-choo! Aker-choo! A-ker-choo!"

Uncle Pennywait sneezed so hard that his glasses bounced off his nose, and only

that they fell on the soft, woolly back of Roly-Poly, they might have been smashed.

"The very sight of golden rod makes me sneeze," said the children's uncle. "Please don't bring it near me. I am going in the house now. Here is a penny for each of you!" He laid the coins on the porch railing and hurried inside.

"A-ker-choo! A-ker-choo! A-ker-choo!" he sneezed again.

"Does golden rod really make him sneeze, or was he doing that for fun?" asked Hal of Daddy Blake, who came out just then.

"It really makes him sneeze," was the answer. "Uncle Pennywait, and many other persons, get what is called hay fever from the yellow pollen flower-dust, as they also do from the fine dust of hay, or other plants and blossoms. Hay fever is like a cold in the head. But where did you get the golden rod?" Daddy Blake asked.

"In the meadow," answered Hal. "Aren't the flowers pretty?"

"Yes, the golden rod is a beautiful

flower," said Mr. Blake. "There are a number of kinds of this plant, and some of its blossoms smell very sweetly. It grows all over this country. Now we will put this in water, so the stems can take a long drink, and keep themselves and the flowers fresh, and we will go out and see what other kinds of wild plants we can discover in the woods and fields."

"Oh, look at Hal's stockings!" Mab suddenly exclaimed. "They are all covered with little brown bugs!"

Hal looked down at his short, fat legs.

"Where did those bugs come from?" he asked. He reached down to pick off some of the little brown things, but he found they would not easily come loose. They seemed quite tightly fastened to his stockings.

"Look out! They might bite!" said Mab.

"No, they aren't bugs," Daddy Blake said. "They are the seeds of a plant called beggar-tick or stick-tight, stick-weed and other names."

"Well, they stick tight all right," said Hal. "What makes 'em, Daddy?"

"See those two little points, like the horns of a beetle, sticking out in front of each seed," went on Mr. Blake, as he helped Mab and Hal pick the brown things from Hal's stockings. "Well, those little points, or horns, each have a hook on them. You have to look closely to see the hooks. When you brushed past this plant, Hal, the seeds, which were loose on the stem, caught on your stockings and clung there."

"Why did they do that?" the little boy wanted to know.

"Because that is the way Mother Nature provided so the seeds would be carried to a new place and planted," Mr. Blake answered. "We do not know what good this plant is, but it is certainly a very smart weed to make us carry its seeds about with us, whether we want to or not.

"The wind, as I have told you, blows some seeds about, for they have little light,

fuzzy handles to them, like the seeds of the dandelion or milkweed. Other seeds, like those of the maple trees, have a broad sail, or a wing, like a little aeroplane, to carry them far off, on the wind, to new growing places. Other seeds come from such beautiful flowers that we are glad to gather them ourselves, and plant them in our garden to make more flowers grow. Those plants do not need to scatter their seeds themselves.

"But this not very pretty stick-tight plant, knows, I suppose, that no one would willingly take its seeds, and they have no way of being blown about. They can not pop themselves to a distance as can the seeds of the jewel weed, or touch-me-not.

"But the seeds have each two strong little hooks on their end, and these hooks fasten themselves to the hair of cows, the wool of sheep, or to the clothing of those of us who go in the fields. Then, later, the seeds fall from the animals, or we pick

them from our clothing, and throw them away, they fall in new growing places and so take root."

"Well, I've got them all picked from my stocking," Hal said, tossing aside the begger-ticks he had pulled off.

"All right. And next year, if you come to this same place, you will find some of that weed growing here. But now let us go for our walk," Daddy Blake said.

With the children he went on down the road, past a cottage where Mrs. Blake's laundress lived. Peeping up over the back fence of the cottage were a number of large, flower-like faces, with dark brown centres, and with yellow petals around the outside edge, in a circle.

"What big, tall flowers!" cried Hal. "They look just like a lot of suns nodding at us."

"They are sun-flowers," Daddy Blake said. "When we come past, on our way home, we will stop and get some seeds."

"To plant?" asked Mab.

"No, to feed to the chickens," Mr. Blake said. "Chickens are very fond of sun-flower seeds. I will tell you something else about these flowers."

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CHAPTER X

ROLY-POLY IN TROUBLE

HAL and Mab walked on with Daddy Blake, the little girl turning now and then to look back at the sun-flowers, nodding their faces at her over the fence. Mab was thinking of what her father had said of feeding the chickens some of the seeds from the sun-flowers.

"I never saw chickens eat them," Mab said.

"No?" questioned Daddy Blake with a smile. "Well you will soon. And if you lived in the country called Russia you would see little boys and girls on the streets of some of the cities, eating sun-flower seeds, just as you children here eat peanuts."

"Really?" asked Hal, opening wide his blue eyes.

"How funny!" laughed Mab.

"Yes, really and truly," Mr. Blake went on. "The Russians do not roast their sun-flower seeds, either, as peanuts are roasted here. The children eat them raw. The sun-flower is a very useful plant, besides being cheerful to look at as it nods to you over the fence, or from the back yard. Flowers are always cheerful, but this big yellow blossom is especially so.

"Sun-flowers grow all over our country," Daddy Blake went on, "and in many far-off lands. The seeds are crushed, and the oil that is squeezed out of them is used as is olive oil. Sun-flower seed oil is also used in certain kinds of lamps in foreign countries. The stalks of the sun-flower plant can be made into a sort of cloth, as flax is made into linen. Some of the Indians who live out West, in this country, eat the sun-flower seeds, and you just wait and see how fond our chickens are of them. Pigs like them also. And, besides furnishing food, oil and cloth, the sun-flower stalks can be made into a kind of paper."

"My! What a lot of things one plant is good for!" exclaimed Mab.

"Is there anything else the sun-flower is used for?" asked Hal, for he, too, thought what he had heard was quite wonderful. Never before had he imagined a sun-flower was so useful.

"It has many more uses," Daddy Blake went on. "Soap and candles can be made from certain oils that are squeezed from the seeds. But there! I have talked enough! Now let us see if we can find any new kinds of flowers."

Daddy Blake led the children toward a small hill at one end of the cow pasture. On one side of the hill was a little wood, and as Mab looked at the waving, green trees, she thought of the day when she had lost her little diamond locket, near the Jack-in-the pulpit.

"Oh dear!" sighed the little girl.

"What is the matter?" asked Daddy Blake. "Are the mosquitoes biting you?"

"A little, yes," answered Mab, as she

listened to the humming of the insects. "But I wasn't thinking of them as much as I was of the locket I lost."

"Never mind, you shall have another," her father promised.

"But the mosquitoes *are* bad!" exclaimed Hal, rubbing his fat legs, where he had been bitten many times.

"And the mosquitoes trouble me, too," Daddy Blake said. "We shall see if we can't find some sort of flower, or plant, with which to drive them away."

"Is there such a plant?" Mab wanted to know.

"There is such a plant, growing on this hill, and it is called pennyroyal," Daddy Blake answered. "The flowers are little purple ones. But it is not the flowers I want, it is the leaves of the pennyroyal."

Mr. Blake pointed to some green stalks, on which were small leaves, shaped something like an egg, only flat, of course. The plant was growing in a dry place, among the grass and stones on the hillside. Daddy picked off some of the leaves,

rubbed them together in his hands, crushing them, and at once Hal and Mab exclaimed:

"Oh, what a spicy smell!"

"Yes, and that smell will keep the mosquitoes from biting us, I hope," the children's father said. "The insects do not like strong odors.

"From pennyroyal an oil is made that hunters and campers take with them to the woods where mosquitoes are troublesome. The men rub the oil on their hands and faces, and the biting insects, flies as well as mosquitoes, go away. The oil of a plant called citronella, which grows in the country of Celon, is also used to drive away mosquitoes.

"We can not make any oil now," went on Daddy Blake, "but we will rub some of the juice of the pennyroyal leaves on our hands and faces, and see what happens."

Hal and Mab liked the odor of the pennyroyal, and, gathering some, and crushing the leaves, as they had seen their father do, they rubbed them on their hands

and cheeks, taking care to get none of the juice in their eyes, for it would have smarted and burned them.

Surely enough, in a little while, the children and Mr. Blake noticed that the mosquitoes all seemed to have flown away. Or, if they buzzed at all, they would only come near enough to smell the pennyroyal, and then they would go somewhere else. The children took some of the leaves with them, since the smell of the pennyroyal must be strong and fresh to drive away the mosquitoes.

"It is good to know the different kinds of plants and flowers," Hal said. "You can use them for so many things."

"Yes," agreed Daddy Blake. "We can study the flowers as we study other lessons, and it is good fun, too. Now we will go down on the other side of this hill. We shall find a little brook, and near that grow some other kinds of mint plants, for the pennyroyal belongs to the mint family."

"What other kinds are there?" Hal wanted to know.

"See if you can not think of some yourself," said Daddy Blake. "Just try to recall the name of some other mint plants."

"Oh, I know! Once I had some gum and a lollypop flavored with it!" cried Hal. "It is—spearmint!"

"That's it," said Daddy Blake. "And there is also another kind of mint you and Mab surely must know."

"Peppermint!" quickly exclaimed Mab. "Aunt Lolly has peppermint lozenges. But is candy flavored from a plant? I thought peppermint was like perfumery, and came in bottles."

"So it does," Daddy Blake explained. "But first the flavor, or perfume, has to be extracted from the plants or blossoms, and put in bottles. Peppermint is made from the peppermint plant. I think we shall soon find some."

Daddy Blake went down the hill with Mab and Hal. Roly-Poly ran on ahead of them. The little poodle dog was taking a drink from the water in the babbling brook, when, all at once, he gave a yelp

and bark, and, running away from the stream he began to go around in a circle, as fast as he could go, as if he were chasing his tail.

"Oh, what is the matter with Roly?" cried Mab. "Look at him!"

"Something must have bitten him!" Hal said. "Maybe it was a big mosquito. We ought to rub some pennyroyal on our dog."

"No, I think it isn't a mosquito that has bitten Roly-Poly," Mr. Blake said, smiling at Hal and Mab. "I think it is a crayfish!" and he ran toward the little dog, who was now howling quite loudly.

Hal and Mab came following after their father, like Jack and Jill down hill, only the Blake children did not tumble. But they were wondering what a crayfish was. Hal thought perhaps it might be a new kind of flower.

CHAPTER XI

A PRETTY BOUQUET

"DADDY, what is a crayfish?" asked Hal Blake, as he and his sister ran down the hill after their father, toward Roly-Poly the fat, little poodle dog, who was still whirling around in a circle, trying to get hold of the end of his own tail.

"I'll show you in a minute," Daddy Blake answered.

"Oh, Roly, what is the matter with you?" asked Mab. But Roly-Poly could only bark and growl his answer.

"I think we shall find it is a crayfish on the end of his tail," said the children's father. "Here, Roly!" he called, and, running forward he caught the little dog up in his arms. Holding Roly tightly, Mr. Blake looked at the end of the poodle's tail.

"Yes, it's a crayfish, children! See!"

Daddy Blake called to Hal and Mab. Mr. Blake picked something off Roly's tail, and held it up. It was alive, for it wiggled.

"There you are, Roly! Not hurt a bit!" laughed Mr. Blake, putting down the little dog, who had now stopped barking and growling. He ran back to finish his drink at the brook.

"Keep your tail up in the air after this, when you come near this water, Roly, and you won't be pinched," went on Daddy. Roly-Poly seemed to understand, for he did as he was told.

"Where is the crayfish?" asked Hal.

"Here," his father said, showing it to him and Mab. The children saw a queer little olive-green animal, like a small lobster, with the same sort of claws, and a tail that folded under its stomach. One of the pinching claws was larger than the other, and it was this large one that had clung to Roly's tail.

"Did it come from the brook, Daddy?" asked Mab.

"Yes, crayfish live in brooks and creeks, under stones, and they swim backward by flapping their tail in the water. In some countries they grow quite large, and are eaten as we eat shrimp. But the kind that grow around here are too little, except for other fish to eat. Bass are very fond of crayfish, but I don't believe Roly-Poly will like them, after this," Mr. Blake said.

"We boys used to wade barefoot in the rivers and creeks and get the crayfish from under stones," went on Daddy Blake. "We called them crabs, but that was not the right name. I'll toss this one back in the water again."

Mr. Crayfish was probably very glad to get back again where he had his home in the brook. But he could live out of water for some time; much longer than a fish.

"I suppose he'll tell his other crayfish friends what a wonderful time he had, riding on a dog's tail," said the children's father.

"Why didn't he pinch you, as he did Roly-Poly, Daddy?" asked Mab.

"Because I had hold of him by the back of his shell, between my thumb and finger, and he could not reach up his claws to get hold of me."

Hal and Mab wanted to look for more crayfish under the stones of the brook, and their father said they might some other day.

"But just now I want to see if we can find those other two kinds of mint plants," Mr. Blake said.

Hal walked along by the edge of the stream. Suddenly he stooped over and pulled up a plant with fragrant green leaves.

"Oh, this must be spearmint!" he cried, smelling of it. "It—it is just like—lolly-pops!"

"Yes, that is spearmint," Daddy Blake said. "The flowers are not very large, nor pretty," and he showed the children the little, pale blossoms. "It is the leaves," he said, "that are used to make the flavors

for gum and candy, and also for medicine. Some persons use this mint in cooking, while others like peppermint. There is peppermint growing over by that old log where the green frog sits," and he pointed to a big Johnny Bull.

Roly-Poly saw the frog at the same time, and with a bark, made a jump for him. But the frog, with a loud croak, splashed into the brook. Daddy Blake picked some of the peppermint.

" You can tell this from spearmint, not only by the smell and taste," he said, " but also by the leaves and stem. The peppermint stem is purple, and that of the spearmint plant is green, and the peppermint leaves are larger than spearmint leaves."

" I took some peppermint once, when I had stomach ache," said Hal, sniffing the fragrant green leaves of both plants.

" Yes, peppermint is very good as medicine," said his father.

" They put it in candy, too," added Mab.

" That's right!" cried Daddy Blake. " Peppermint candy is flavored with this

same green plant that grows here. Men gather the leaves, press out the oil, and sell it. The peppermint flowers are not any prettier than those of the spearmint, the leaves of which are also crushed for an oil that flavors gum and lollypops."

"Oh, what is that big, blue flower over there?" cried Mab, poiting to a cluster of several that grew on the other side of the brook. "I'm sure that must be a very useful plant, because it has such large, beautiful blossoms."

"That is not always the way to tell," said her father with a smile. "While large flowers are often very beautiful, and while everything that is beautiful is good, in its way, still very often the little, low-growing, and not at all pretty, plants, like peppermint and spearmint, with blossoms that can hardly be seen, are of great use to us; stopping our pains and helping sick folk to become well.

"But now suppose we gather as many beautiful blossoms as we can find, and make a pretty bouquet to take home to

Mother and Aunt Lolly. We will begin with some of those blue blossoms you liked so much, Mab. They are called flag-lilies, while another name is the blue iris. Still another name is the French one of *Fleur-de-lis*. That name comes from a word which means rainbow, and some kinds of these flowers are colored almost as gaily as is the rainbow.

" But the iris which grow around here are either dark blue, purplish or a light blue. They are a very beautiful flower, as you can see, growing on their tall, slender green stems. Now for a pretty bouquet."

" But we'll not gather any golden rod to make Uncle Pennywait sneeze," said Hal thoughtfully.

" No, indeed," agreed Mab with a laugh.

The children and their father crossed the brook on a little bridge, and Hal and Mab were soon gathering the blue iris flowers. How beautiful they were! on their long, green stems, with the three delicate petals shaped like the point of a spear or arrow.

"Oh, see the red lilies over there!" suddenly called Mab, pointing a little distance ahead. "Let's get some of those for our bouquet. What are they, Daddy?"

"That is called the Turk's cap lily," said Mr. Blake. "It is something like the beautiful tiger lily of Japan. We will pick some of those for our bouquet."

"I hope there are no tigers near those flowers," Mab said, and she clung tightly to her father's hand as they walked over the meadow.

CHAPTER XII

THE LOST NECKLACE

"WHAT is the matter with you, Mab?" asked Hal Blake of his sister, as he noticed how closely she walked beside her father, never letting go of Daddy Blake's hand. "What is the matter?"

"I—I don't believe I want to get any of those tiger lilies, Daddy," said the little girl softly.

"Those aren't tiger lilies," her father said. "They are only a little like them. Why, did you think there might be tigers in the grass near the flowers?"

Mab nodded her head, and did not let go her father's hand.

"You mustn't be afraid," he spoke kindly. "As I said, the Turk's cap lily is only a little like the tiger lily of Japan.

Tiger lilies are called so because they are colored, or striped, like tigers.

"See what a beautiful orange color they are, and some are almost red. Come, don't be afraid, Mab. There are no tigers any nearer than the circus, and those are locked in strong cages so they can't get out."

"I'd like to go to the circus again," Hal said.

"But I wouldn't like to be carried off in a wagon as we once were," spoke Mab, and she thought of the time she and Hal had gone on such a queer journey, as I have told you in the book about Daddy taking the children to the circus. Mab was laughing now, and she was not frightened any more.

She and Hal gathered the red lilies, putting them with the blue iris blossoms. The flowers made a beautiful bouquet. The Turk's cap lilies had each six petals, or parts. Some were a deep orange in color, striped with light yellow, with a dash of light green and white at the center.

Down inside the lily-cup were dark purple spots, while the six long, green stamins, which stood up in the center of the lily, like straws in a lemonade glass, had dark-brown seed-like things dangling from their ends, as jewels hang in a lady's ears.

"Oh, what a fine bouquet we'll have!" cried Mab in delight.

"And Mother and Aunt Lolly will be so glad!" spoke Hal.

Over the meadow and through the wood wandered the children with Daddy Blake, gathering flowers. They picked buttercups and daisies; black-eyed Susans, or, as some call them, ox-heart daisies. They gathered red clover, wild geraniums, and found a few blue-fringed gentians, which are rather rare. They picked bouncing Bets, and even found some blue, "ragged sailors," growing near what had once been an old-fashioned garden of a house long since torn down.

Hal and Mab soon had as many flowers as they could carry, and, when they reached the house, and their mother and

Aunt Lolly saw the beautiful bouquets, they cried out.

"Oh! Ah, how lovely!"

"It's just like what they say when they see a skyrocket on the Fourth of July!" exclaimed Hal with a laugh.

Uncle Pennywait looked in through the doorway as Mother Blake and Aunt Lolly were putting the flowers in water for the table.

"A-ker-choo! A-ker-choo! A-ker-choo!" sneezed Uncle Pennywait very loudly, but I think he only did it for fun.

"Don't be afraid," Mab called to him. "There isn't any golden rod in this bouquet."

"That's good! I'm glad of it!" he said with a laugh. "Then I'll come in and smell of the flowers."

And he did, sniffing and smelling the spearmint and peppermint flowers the children had gathered, and nibbling some of the spicy leaves.

The pet kitten came rubbing up against Daddy Blake's legs.

"No, Muffins," he said, scratching her back, "we didn't bring you any catnip this time. But I have some chickweed for Dick," and he put into the canary bird's cage some of the light green leaves and Dick sang a song of thanks. For birds love this tender low-growing chickweed plant, the tiny blossoms of which never fully open if the day is cloudy.

"Well, are you all through hunting wild flowers?" asked Aunt Lolly.

"Oh, no indeed!" cried Daddy Blake. "There are some that have not yet blossomed. We shall be searching for wild flowers until cold weather comes."

Suddenly Mab thought of something.

"Oh, we were going to feed the sunflower seeds to the chickens," she said, for they had stopped at the home of the laundress, as Mr. Blake had said they would.

"Oh, yes! Come on, Daddy!" Hal cried.

Out to the chicken yard, with the sunflower seeds, went Daddy Blake, Hal and Mab. When the big, black seeds were

scattered on the ground, the chickens were wild to pick them up. The hens and roosters flew here, there—everywhere, scratching, pecking and fluttering, and making a great noise.

"What makes them like the seeds so much?" asked Hal.

"Because they are rich and oily, and taste somewhat like nuts," explained Daddy Blake. "But now we will go in the house and wash our hands and faces to be ready for supper. Some other day we will go hunting flowers again."

And so, on many other afternoons Daddy Blake took Hal and Mab searching for wild flowers. The children were anxious to find as many new kinds as possible, just as I hope you children who read, or hear this story read, will be glad to study about the wild flowers.

I have space here to tell you only a very little about a very few kinds, but there are books that, when you grow older, you will want to get, so you may read and study

about the beautiful and useful plants and blossoms.

It was now Summer, and the Blake children went away for a long vacation. They went to a place in the country, near a beautiful lake, and in the woods and fields near it they found many new wild flowers.

By this time Mab's father had bought her a new necklace, and though she liked it very much, she often wished she could find the one she had lost when gathering the Jacks-in-the-pulpit that first day in the forest. And Mab did not wear her new necklace when she and Hal went to gather flowers.

" For I don't want to lose this one," she said with a little sigh, as she remembered her other pretty one, with the sparkling diamond.

Bye-and-bye Summer began to get ready to go down South for the Winter. The days were growing shorter, and it was dark at seven o'clock. Hal, Mab and the rest of the Blake family came back

from the country, bringing Roly-Poly with them. The little poodle dog was fatter than ever, and he could turn a somersault without half trying.

"Oh, all the pretty flowers are dead!" Mab sadly cried one crisp October day, as she and Hal, with Daddy Blake, walked across the meadow toward the wood. The meadow now was not green, but sober brown in color.

"Never mind," said Daddy Blake. "The flowers are dead, it is true, but they only die so there may be seeds to make more flowers grow next year. When Summer comes again there will be more and prettier flowers than before. But come, let us go to the woods. I think perhaps we can find some late-staying blossoms that are not afraid of the cold."

And they did find some flowers. They were almost like straw, or dried grass to the touch, and they were called "everlasting," because, as Daddy Blake said, these flowers did not droop and wither as most other flowers do when picked.

"But they are not as pretty as the Turk's cap lily, or the blue iris," said Mab, as she gathered some of the everlastings. "They have no color."

"No, but we should be glad they are brave enough to stay so late with us," Daddy Blake said. "It is not every flower that would do so."

"Oh, what a pretty flower over there!" Mab cried, pointing through the trees. "See, it is a beautiful red!"

"That is not a flower," said her father. "It is our old friend, Jack-in-the-pulpit. But he has put on his winter coat of red, you see. Those are his seed-berries."

"Oh, I'm going to gather some!" cried Mab. She ran over to the Jack, who looked very different now compared to what he had been in the spring. Now he was just a clump of red berries, growing on a stalk close to the ground. And, as Mab broke off the stem, she gave a startled cry.

"Oh, look what I found!" she exclaimed. "Look, Daddy! Hal! See what I found!"

Something shining glittered around the stalk of red berries.

"It's my gold necklace! My necklace with the diamond locket that I lost!" cried Mab. "I've found it again! Oh, I've found it again!" and she danced about in delight amid the brown woodland leaves.

"Let me see," said Daddy Blake.

Mab held it up to her father.

"Yes, it is your lost necklace!" he said.

"How glad I am!" sang Mab.

"And I am glad too!" exclaimed Hal.

And so the lost necklace was found again, with the stalk of red Jack-in-the-pulpit berries growing right through the chain.

"The necklace must have become unfastened from your neck when we were here early in the Summer, looking for flowers," said Daddy Blake. "The gold chain fell to the ground, and was hidden in the moss, where we could not find it. Then a Jack-flower grew right up through it, lifting it up as it grew, and kept it here until now."

"Oh, how glad I am to get it back!" cried Mab, her eyes sparkling with delight. "Now I have two lockets, but I like my old one best. I am going to call that my flower-locket, for I lost it when I was looking for flowers, and found it again in the same way."

Roly-Poly seemed almost as glad as Mab, for he rushed here and there, barking as hard as he could, and turning one somersault after another.

Mab walked along with her father and Hal, carrying the stalk of red berries which had grown up through the locket chain.

"The red berries look good enough to eat," said Hal.

"Never do that!" exclaimed Mr. Blake quickly. "Never eat any berries you find in the woods or fields—red, blue or any other color, unless you are sure they are not poisonous. Often red berries will make you very ill. These red ones would not be at all good to eat."

As the children and their father passed

a place where some one had left a load of ashes, and other refuse, Hal saw some large, white flowers growing on a tall, dark green stalk.

"I'm going to pick some of those," he said.

"No, don't," his father spoke. "That is a poison plant, and it is called Jamestown-weed, or Jimson-weed. Though the flowers are pretty to look at they do not smell nice. So do not pick them. In the fall there are seed pods on the stalk, and though they look something like pears they are very poisonous to eat. So never touch them."

Hal and Mab hurried past this plant, which had blossoms like those of very big morning glories. It grows in waste places, and while it is poisonous it has some uses. It hides unpleasant piles of rubbish, and the leaves of it dried and burned, so that a person may breathe the smoke of them, are said to be good for asthma.

But Hal and Mab soon forgot about the

poison Jimson-weed in thinking about the diamond locket so strangely found. Mab carried it very carefully, still twined around the stalk of the Jack-in-the-pulpit, with its clump of red berries.

And how surprised Mother Blake, Aunt Lolly and Uncle Pennywait were when the children reached home and told their story.

"Well, you certainly had a wonderful time, hunting flowers with Daddy; didn't you?" said Aunt Lolly.

"The best time—ever!" exclaimed Hal.

"I say so, too!" cried Mab, as she climbed up in her father's lap and kissed him.

"Bow-wow!" barked Roly-Poly, and that, I suppose, was his way of saying he, too, had had lots of fun, even if a crayfish had pinched his tail.

"Where will you take us next, Daddy?" asked Mab, as she looked at the little diamond sparkling in her locket.

"Oh, I don't know!" answered Mr. Blake with a laugh. "I think just now I

will take you down to supper, for I hear the bell ringing."

And down to the dining room they all went, a merry party, while, on the table, with some gorgeous chrysanthemums Mother Blake had gathered from the garden, were the pale, straw everlasting flowers from the wood, and the red clump of Jack-in-the-pulpit berries, that had found Mab's locket for her.

"I wonder where Daddy will take us next?" asked Hal of his sister.

"I don't know," she replied, "but wherever it is we will have fun."

"Yes," agreed Hal. "It is always such fun to go anywhere with our Daddy!"

THE END

The next volume in this series will be entitled: "Daddy Takes Us Hunting Birds." It will tell of the wild birds, how they live, how to take pictures of them, how to feed them and how to make birds take their own pictures.

JOIE, TOMMIE AND KITTIE KAT

"Say, I'll tell you what let's do!" cried Joie, the kitten boy, as he came from school.

"Well, what is it?" asked his brother Tommie. "Do you want to go fishing again?"

"No, let's give a concert, and charge five pins to come in," answered Joie. "We can all sing."

"Meaouw! Meaouw! Meaouw!" cried Kittie, the sister of Joie and Tommie. "May I be in the concert, too?"

"Of course," replied Tommie, with a polite bow. "We shall be glad to have you."

How the Kat children gave a concert, and what happened at it, as well as many other funny things they did, you may read of in a book called "Bedtime Stories: Joie, Tommie and Kittie Kat." It has nice pictures in.

You have read the Daddy books, so surely you will like the Bedtimes. They are by Howard R. Garis, author of the Daddy volumes. R. F. Fenno & Company, of 18 East 17th Street, New York City, publish the book about the Kat family. If your dealer does not have it, and can not get it, the publishers will mail it to you on receipt of the price, and also send you a nice colored poster for your room. Send before you forget it. This is a busy world.

BUDDY AND BRIGHTEYES PIGG

Did you ever roll down hill inside a cabbage?

No, I don't believe you ever have, but Buddy, the little guinea pig boy, once did. He was out walking one day, and he found a big cabbage by the roadside. First he took a nibble, and then he took a bite, and soon he had eaten his way inside the cabbage.

"Ha!" cried Buddy Pigg. "This is very fine, indeed! I will take some cabbage home to my sister Brighteyes."

So he went to sleep inside the cabbage, and then it rolled down hill, and then——

But you must get the book called "Bedtime Stories: Buddy and Brighteyes Pigg," to read the rest of the story. There are thirty others in the book, which is published by R. F. Fenno & Company, 18 East 17th Street, New York City, who will send it to you if your store does not have it.

Howard R. Garis, who wrote the Daddy books, also wrote the one about the guinea pigs, and you will surely like them. With the book comes a prettily colored poster of Buddy and Brighteyes, that you can hang in your room

"Well, there is no use talking!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, one morning. "I shall never find my fortune—never!"

"Oh, yes, you will!" cried the red squirrel, as he combed out his bushy tail with a chestnut burr. "I would not be surprised, Mr. Longears, if you found your fortune to-morrow or next day."

"Do you really think so?" asked Uncle Wiggily happily, as he made his nose twinkle like a star on a frosty night in June.

"I do," answered the red squirrel.

"Well, then I'll travel farther on," decided the rabbit gentleman.

And he did keep on his journey. You may read all about it in a book called "Bedtime Stories: Uncle Wiggily's Travels." It has in it fine colored pictures by Louis Wisa. R. F. Fenno & Company, of 18 East 17th Street, New York City, publish the volume, and Howard R. Garis wrote the stories. He also wrote the Daddy books you have just read. If you can not get the Bedtime Books at your store, send to the publishers. You may also have a pretty poster in colors.

JOHNNIE AND BILLIE BUSHYTAIL

"Come, boys!" chattered Mrs. Bushytail, the lady squirrel, one morning. "You must now have a lesson, and learn how to jump."

"Yes, indeed!" exclaimed Papa Bushytail. "Squirrel boys must know how to jump out of tall trees, as well as to crack nuts."

"Oh, but I am afraid!" cried Billie, the boy squirrel. "I am afraid to jump."

"And so am I," added his brother Johnnie.

"But you both must learn how to jump!" went on Mamma Bushytail, as she nibbled at a nut sandwich.

You have read of Daddy Blake, and Hal and Mab, and you will be glad to learn how Johnnie and Billie Bushytail learned to jump, and do many other things that squirrels should do.

Go to your own book store, and get the volume called "Bedtime Stories: Johnnie and Billie Bushytail." It was written by Howard R. Garis, who wrote the Daddy books. If your store does not have Johnnie and Billie, and the colored pictures, send to the publishers, R. F. Fenno & Company, 18 East 17th Street, New York City, who will send the book on receipt of price, and also a fine poster.

SAMMIE AND SUSIE LITTLETAIL

"Oh, Susie!" cried Sammie Littletail, the boy rabbit, one day, when he and his sister were hopping along in the woods. "Oh, Susie, something has caught me by the leg!"

"Why, Sammie! You are fast in a trap!" exclaimed Susie, the girl rabbit. "Oh, dear! How will you ever get out?"

"I don't know," answered Sammie, sadly.

"Well, I know," spoke Susie, bravely. "I will go get Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, to help you out of the trap."

Getting into a trap, and out of it again, is only one of the thirty-one adventures in the book called "Bedtime Stories: Sammie and Susie Littletail."

You have read of Daddy Blake, and of Hal and Mab, his little boy and girl, and Howard R. Garis, who wrote about them, also wrote the Bedtime books. You can get them at your book store, or from the publishers, R. F. Fenno & Company, 18 East 17th Street, New York City. Send for a catalog.

LULU, ALICE AND JIMMIE WIBBLEWOBBLE

"Quack! Quack!" cried Lulu Wibblewobble, the girl duck, when she was out paddling in the pond one morning. "Quack! Quack!"

"Why, what has happened?" asked her sister Alice, as she tied her watercress-green hair ribbon in a double bow.

"Oh, I am stuck in the mud!" cried poor Lulu.

"Oh, my! Corn meal cakes, with snail sauce on them!" shouted Jimmie Wibblewobble, the boy duck. "We shall have to get Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady, to pull you out."

You may read the rest of this story in the book called "Lulu, Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble." It is one of the Bedtime Stories, written by Howard R. Garis, who also wrote the Daddy book you have just read.

There are thirty-one duck stories in the book, and eight finely colored pictures by Louis Wisa. If you can not get this volume at your book store, send to the publishers, R. F. Fenno & Company, 18 East 17th Street, New York City, who will mail it on receipt of price, and also send you a beautiful poster.

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